

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 ACDA-19 OMB-01 NIC-01 AGR-20 EB-11

COME-00 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /154 W
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R 101245Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1290

AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 1158

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HU, GW, GE

SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD BRANDT RESIGNATION

REF: BUDAPEST 1139

1. DURING TALKS LAST FEW DAYS WITH HUNGARIANS, OFFICIAL AND NON-OFFICIAL ALIKE, IT IS CLEAR THAT UNCERTAINTY AND CONFUSION BEST DESCRIBE THEIR REACTION TO BRANDT'S RESIGNATION. FUELING THE UNCERTAINTY IS SUSPICION RE SCHMIDT'S CREDENTIALS, PARTICULARLY HIS PAST ROLE IN DEFENSE POLICIES. GOVT OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT IMPLICATIONS FOR BRANDT'S OST-POLITIK WITH MORE SUSPICIOUS ONES ASKING WHY GUILLAUME ESPIONAGE CASE WAS BROKEN AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME. THEY OBVIOUSLY SEE IN IT EFFORTS ON PART OF RIGHTIST ANTI-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS TO REVERSE TREND TOWARDS DETENTE AND ARE CONCERNED THAT IT JUST MIGHT HAPPEN THAT WAY. BENEATH THE SURFACE WE SENSE SOME RESENTMENT
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OF CLUMSY HANDLING OF CASE BY GDR OFFICIALS WHOM ONE HUNGARIAN

REFERRED TO AS THOSE "LITERAL-MINDED PRUSSIANS". HOWEVER, MOST GOH OFFICIALS TRY TO PUT A ROSY HUE ON GERMAN PICTURE BY SAYING THAT, WHILE RELATIONS WITH FEDERAL REPUBLIC ARE IMPORTANT, THERE WILL BE NO RETURN TO COLD WAR AS LONG AS US AND USSR DO NOT WISH IT.

2. ONE MIDDLE-LEVEL FONOFF OFFICIAL WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY BRANDT TOOK GUILLAUME CASE SO SERIOUSLY SINCE ESPIONAGE IS EVERYDAY FACT OF LIFE. "E ERY COUNTRY", HE SAID "WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN AGENT IN STREAM OF POLICY FORMATION OF POTENTIAL ENEMY COUNTRY, EVEN WEST GERMANS. WHY THEN, IS BRANDT SO UPSET?" HE HAD NO RESPONSE WHEN EMBOFF ASKED HIM HOW HE WOULD SUGGEST THAT FRG EXPLAIN TO PEOPLE WHY THEY SHOULD SUPPORT DETENTE AND IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH EAST BERLIN WHEN GDR HONEYCOMBED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE WITH INTELLIGENCE AGENTS.

3. HUNGARIAN BUSINESSMEN ARE WORRIED BUT THEY ARE ALSO CONFUSED. THEIR CONCERN RE POSSIBLE CUTBACK IN WEST GERMAN-HUNGARIAN TRADE US HEIGHTENED BY WORRY OVER ITALY'S DRASTIC IMPORT CURBS WHICH ONE HUNGARIAN BUSINESSMAN SAID COULD COST GOH 150 MILLION DOLLARS ALONE IN MEAT EXPORTS. THOSE WHO PAY ATTENTION TO THE PARTY DIRECTION PARROT LINE FROM "NEPSZABADSAG" THAT BRANKT'S DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY INTERNAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY INFLATION AND RISING UNEMPLOYMENT (REFTEL) BUT THEY SAY NOTHING ABOUT FUTURE OF DETENTE. OTHERS, HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY WORRIED, JUST AS OBVIOUSLY ARE LOOKING FOR SOVIET REACTION BEFORE COMMITTING THEMSELVES.

4. GOH OFFICIALS ARE DOING SAME; SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN NO PUBLIC REFERENCES TO RECENT DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN FRG AND GDR BY ANY PARTY OR GOVT FIGURE WHICH STANDS IN SHARP CNTRAST TO GIEREK ACTION (WARSAW 2559). GOH SILENCE MAY BE DUE TO UNCERTAINTY RE MOST EFFECTIVE LINE TO TAKE. SOME LEADERS MUST WONDER ABOUT EFFICACY OF TAKING TOO OPEN AND LAUDATORY A POSITION VIS-A -VIS BRANDT AND HIS POLICIES FOR FEAR OF WORSENING SITTATION. THEY MAY PREFER TO WAIT UNTIL DUST SETTLES AND FRG PICTURE IS CLEARER BEFORE MAKING ANY PUBLIC STATEMSNTS. CONFIDENTIAL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, POLITICAL STABILITY, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BUDAPE01158
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740114-0801
From: BUDAPEST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740559/aaaacabn.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BUDAPEST 1139
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <13 JUN 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUNGARIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD BRANDT RESIGNATION
TAGS: PFOR, HU, GE, GC, (BRANDT, WILLY)
To: STATE BONN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005